

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 2327

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, March 28, 2007

Title: An act relating to a system of standards, instruction, and assessments for mathematics and science.

Brief Description: Regarding a system of standards, instruction, and assessments for mathematics and science.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives P. Sullivan, Priest, Haler, Quall, Jarrett, Wallace, Kenney, McDermott, Sells, Santos, Wood and Ormsby).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/12/07, 83-15.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/19/07, 3/28/07 [DPA-WM, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; Eide, Hobbs, Kauffman, Oemig, Rasmussen and Weinstein.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Clements, Hewitt and Zarelli.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Under current law, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is responsible for developing a statewide academic assessment system for reading, writing, mathematics, and science, which includes the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). The State Board of Education (SBE) has responsibility for a statewide accountability system for student performance.

Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, students must meet the state standard in reading writing, and mathematics on the WASL, or a legislatively approved alternative assessment, to achieve a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA), which is required to graduate from high school. Science is added beginning with the graduating class of 2010. Students must retake the WASL at least once prior to taking an approved alternative assessment.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Three alternative assessments have received legislative approval: the Grade Point Average/WASL cohort comparison, the Collection of Evidence (COE), and the PSAT/SAT/ACT (for mathematics only). Alternative assessments are required to be comparable in rigor to the skills and knowledge that the student must demonstrate on the WASL for each content area.

Students who do not meet the state standard on the WASL, beginning in fifth grade, must have a student learning plan created and updated annually. The plan must include the actions the school intends to take to improve the student's skills in the relevant content area(s), and for eight through twelfth grade students, it must include other steps needed to be taken by the student to meet state standards and stay on track for graduation.

Students who are not appropriately assessed by the WASL, even with accommodations, may earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA), instead of a CAA, to graduate from high school. To earn the CIA, the student must demonstrate skills and abilities commensurate with the student's individual education program.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill: Changes are made to the use of the WASL as a graduation requirement.

Students in the graduating classes of 2008 through 2012 who have not meet the state standard in mathematics on the WASL, or an alternative assessment, may graduate from high school without a CAA or CIA if they:

- meet the state standard in reading and writing and satisfy all other state and school district graduation requirements; and
- successfully earn additional high school mathematics credit after their sophomore year, designed to increase their proficiency on the WASL. (The students in the class of 2008 must earn one additional credit after their junior year and the remaining graduating classes must earn two.)

These provisions are null and void if not specifically funded in the 2007 operating budget.

The requirement that students must also pass the science WASL to earn a CAA is delayed from 2010 to the graduating class of 2014.

SBE, with the SPI, will select end-of-course (EOC) assessments in mathematics (algebra I and geometry) and science (biology). The EOC assessments must rely on multiple-choice questions and must be able to be administered on-line. The mathematics assessments must be available to school districts for optional use in the 2008-09 school year and required in 2009-10. The algebra I EOC becomes the WASL beginning with the graduating class of 2013. The geometry EOC, with the algebra I EOC assessment, will become the mathematics WASL beginning with the graduating class of 2014. The biology EOC assessment must be available for optional use in the 2009-10 school year and required in 2010-11. The biology EOC will become the science WASL beginning with the graduating class of 2014. The SBE must report to the Governor and Legislature regarding the feasibility of the EOC assessment timelines. School districts are responsible for designing and implementing the courses, and course content instruction can be integrated. These provisions are null and void if not specifically funded in the 2007 operating budget.

The SPI must make diagnostic assessments available in elementary and middle school in reading, writing, science, and math, and must provide funds for districts to administer

diagnostic assessments. These provisions are null and void if not specifically funded in the 2007 operating budget.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED STRIKING AMENDMENT(S) AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Early Learning & K-12 Education): The exception for students to graduate without a CAA is maintained if the student has not met the state standard in mathematics on the WASL, but only in 2008 and 2009. The student must still pass the reading and writing WASL or an alternative, meet other specified requirements, and take additional high school mathematics courses. Career and technical education credits that are designed to increase the student's math proficiency toward meeting the standard on the WASL and the segmented math course developed by Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) are added as acceptable courses for this purpose.

An English Language Learner (ELL) who scores at level 2 or below on the English proficiency test does not have to take the WASL, except for federal purposes, but must pass the WASL to graduate.

The EOC in Algebra I, Geometry, and Biology will become alternative assessments to the WASL prior to becoming the math and science WASL. The timelines are the same. The SBE must report to the Legislature whether these timelines are feasible and whether the science EOC should be expanded to other science content areas or processes. The EOCs must be scored at the state-level or by a third-party, unless multiple choice assessments, which may be scored at the district level and administered on-line.

The requirement that students must retake the WASL once before accessing an alternative is removed. Several new WASL alternatives are approved, including expanding the PSAT/SAT/ACT alternative to include reading and writing; selected Advance Placement examinations; and the mathematics and science EOCs selected by the SBE, with the SPI. The SBE must choose three standardized norm-reference assessments in each subject assessed on the WASL to serve as alternatives. The SBE must review the ACT, ASSET, and COMPASS tests and determine whether these tests should also be used as WASL alternatives. The SPI must adopt rules for all the alternatives. Eligibility criteria is established to access the GPA/cohort alternative; the student must have at least a 3.2 grade point average.

An appeals panel is created at each Education Service District (ESD). The SPI must establish criteria and guidelines for the panel to use prior to implementation, and present to the SBE to review and comment. To access the appeals process a student must either first retake the WASL, have taken an alternative, or have a career and technical education industry certification or be in a program that leads to certification. The ESDs must annually report number and type of appeals received and approved.

Student learning plans are renamed student success plans and additional definitions for the content of the plans is provided. Eighth through twelfth grade students not meeting the standard on the WASL must have a plan with semi-annual benchmarks and take a required class or classes in the content area in which the student did not meet the standard. The plan may require the school district to offer and the student to take before/after school sessions, Saturday school, and/or summer school, and may require a test preparation class. ELLs who score 2 or below in language proficiency must also have a student success plan. The SBE will

develop a tiered intervention plan for a district with at least 10 percent of the students not meeting benchmarks in student plans.

The requirement for SPI to make elementary and middle level diagnostic assessments available and provide funds for districts to administer diagnostics is maintained. So is the null and void clause provided for this section. The SPI and SBE must report annually on the actions required in this act.

There is an emergency clause.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on March 14, 2007.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The key component of the bill is that it sets a clear direction and timeline for implementation of a new end-of-course assessment system to replace the math and science WASL. This system will be simple to administer and provide results on a timely basis that will be usable by the teachers, parents, and students. The timelines to implement the EOC assessments have been extended to ensure the reliability and validity. This bill is a result of the legislative process and is a response to the Governor and the SPI recommendation to delay the math WASL as a graduation requirement. We need to take action during the delay. We are establishing a baseline for all tenth graders to understand reading, writing, algebra, geometry, and biology. If the student doesn't understand we will know quickly and we can remediate in time for them to graduate. The EOCs will actually be more rigorous than the current WASL and can assess our state standards. There is a need to keep high standards that are aligned with national and international standards and create multiple pathways. We need an education system that challenges every student, which means access to diagnostic assessments, not the minimum bar of the WASL. The WASL is not diagnostic and may be why some remediation has not been successful. Each student has different goals after high school and we should help each of them achieve their goals. We like that there are additional alternative assessments and that they are nationally known.

CON: This bill does not go far enough. We have a crisis and you need to act. It is not just about the math. There is no trust between parents and schools with the WASL in place. Denying a diploma has costs for the student and our society. By continuing to impose the WASL as a graduation requirement you are ignoring the impact of poverty on learning and to do so consciously is discriminating against children who live in poverty. The system is not equitable and the playing field is not level, the assessment is cumbersome and flawed, and students should not be punished using the scores of one test. The entire WASL graduation requirement should be removed. EOC will not permit integrated math and that is the right way to present mathematics. We need to improve the classroom practice and not dismantle the standards or the WASL.

OTHER: There is a way to do much of what this bill does by changing the WASL to be on-line, get the scores back sooner, and be more useful. There is concern whether only algebra, geometry, and biology are the right subjects to test and are the right number of subjects. We

are concerned that off-the-shelf tests will undermine the standards that we currently have built as stepping stones from kindergarten on up. There is concern with using only multiple-choice questions because then you aren't really testing what you want to test, especially on the writing assessment. The WASL has caused us to really teach writing and problem solving because it is not all multiple-choice questions. It isn't just about the test and just changing EOCs will not be enough to solve the systemic problem it is also about the standards, how you measure the standards, professional development, teacher and principal capacity, aligned curriculum, diagnostic and formative assessments, what you do about the students who don't pass and connecting all these things. There is also concern with adopting additional alternative assessments and with the message that the delay in math is sending to students. Teachers across the state are getting students up to standard in math and the other subjects. We need to support these teachers and students and keep the graduation requirement.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Sullivan, prime sponsor; Representative Priest, co-sponsor; Richard Jansons, Richland School Board; Rich Semler, Richland School District Superintendent; Lucas Van Ginneken, Where's the Math; Pat Steinburg, for Governor Booth Gardner; Linda Krumins-Dunlop, citizen.

CON: Rachel DeBellis, Raul de la Rosa, citizens; Juanita Doyon, Parent Empowerment Network; Russ Killingsworth, Washington State Math Council; Ruth Parker, Mathematics Education Collaborative.

OTHER: Dr. Terry Bergeson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction; Edie Harding, State Board of Education; Trina Hendrickson, citizen.